

September 7, 1977

Dr. Girish N. Vyas
Laboratory Medicine
506 M

Dear Girish,

As you know from our several conversations over the past few days, I am planning to develop a small program in this laboratory to study the molecular biology of hepatitis B virus. We have had extensive experience working with RNA tumor viruses (avian sarcoma virus and mouse mammary tumor virus), with emphasis upon a detailed molecular description of the synthesis and integration of virus-specific DNA, as well as production of viral RNA and protein. During the next two years (the second of which I will be spending on sabbatical leave in London), I hope to develop an approach to studying the repl~~at~~ation of HBV in similar detail; I expect that a significant portion of my laboratory will be devoted to HBV research by the time of my return in mid-1979.

I think there are several ways in which we can be of assistance to each other. First, and most obviously, I am encouraged by your kind offer to help me obtain specimens and healthy carriers positive for Dane particles. Secondly, I am pleased to have access to the intellectual resources and wide clinical and laboratory experience of the interdisciplinary group you have assembled over the past few years; I hope to be able to participate actively in your collective deliberations and ventures. In return, I hope I can be of use to you and your colleagues by making assays for viral DNA and DNA polymerase readily available; these may be ~~un~~useful in both your proposed epidemiological or HB_eAG studies. In the not too distant future, I hope we can consider more ambitious collaborative studies - e.g., correlations of protein and nucleic acid sequences, of antigenic subtype and genotype defined by restriction endonuclease mapping, or of viral gene expression and hepatic histopathology.

If all goes well in the pilot studies I have planned, I expect to be applying for support (to commence in 1979) for my HBV research. In the meantime, I shall be very grateful for the materials and advice you have offered me, as well as for the laboratory space you have permitted me to use until I can arrange for suitable facilities in my own laboratory for working with this agent.

Sincerely,

Harold E. Varmus, M.D.
Professor of Microbiology

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